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ABSTRACT

This newsletter summarizes the current state of understanding about self-esteem in teenaged girls. It notes that self-esteem is a concept that is difficult to define and to measure. Current research indicates that self-esteem is composed of many factors; however, a reasonable functional definition is the value a person places on herself or himself. Some experts study cultural expectations, since different cultural expectations affect self-esteem, whether the definition is based on racial or ethnic identity, sexual identity, or disabilities. Other researchers look at the influence of schools and education, or sexuality, health issues, math and science ability, or sports. The important role families and schools play in allowing young women to achieve a positive level of self-esteem also is discussed. A strong adult role model in a nonexploitative relationship is important. Other major influences are schools (academic connectedness), spiritual connectedness, and low family stress levels. Suggestions for further research are given. These include further study of multicultural issues, differing life experiences (including issues of women's role in society and violence against women), and switching from an emphasis on solving specific problems to research on resiliency and resistance. (KM)

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ED 371 249

WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL EQUITY ACT PUBLISHING CENTER DIGEST

Building a Self: Teenaged Girls and Issues of Self-Esteem

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Girls experience a crisis provoked by what their vision of the world and themselves is, and their learning of what the world is really about.

Adolescent years are a time of change, and change in different areas. In U.S. society, this is a period when many young people begin separating from the family, exploring who they are as individuals, distinct from the relations they have had with other family members. They test their world and themselves to see what their relationship is with friends and community. Many question or push against the beliefs that they've learned from parents or guardians. They also look for others with whom they can fit in—close friends, church groups, gangs, school clubs, sports teams.

Adolescents also experience physical changes in their bodies, many of which are directly linked to their sexuality. And in the majority U.S. culture, sexuality, even for adults, is a difficult issue. The fact that many people feel uncomfortable talking about it, especially with nonadults, combined with media images of sex in terms of violence or power, and teenaged sexual activity spoken about only in negative terms, makes sexuality for many teenagers very confusing.

As adolescents learn what their communities and the dominant culture value, they may face even more struggles. In this context, issues of bias and oppression must be confronted. While researchers have shown that toddlers are already internalizing power structures and knowledge of who "fits" and who doesn't, these issues take on particular significance as teenagers feel their way toward their own identity.

What *is* self-esteem?

Self-esteem has been difficult for researchers and others to define, much less to measure. As Professor of Psychology Susan Harter notes, "ambiguous definitions of the construct, inadequate measuring instruments, and lack of theory have plagued self-esteem research."[1]

These days, there is a growing consensus among researchers that self-esteem is an image of self that is made up of factors including academic competence, social acceptance, parental approval, and appearance. In this article, the general, but functional, definition will be how much value a person places on her- or himself—their own idea of who they are as a person and who they want to be. This definition will include comfort with and confidence in themselves and their abilities.

Like other studies, a recent American Association of University Women (AAUW) report on self-esteem and educational issues found that, as a whole, body image is inexorably linked to self-image in young women. Not only is physical appearance extremely important, but young women feel increasingly more negative about their bodies as they go through puberty. "Boys tend to view the physical changes positively, as getting bigger and stronger. Girls believe their changes lead in a negative direction, reinforcing their declining self-esteem and gender stereotypes."[2]

Self-esteem and the way we examine it is strongly affected by cultural values and expectations. What one person defines as low self-esteem may be resistance to cultural expectations to another. Almost everyone feels they know intuitively what self-esteem is, but these intuitive definitions are based on cultural learning, affected by all of the values and prejudices of that culture.

What do we know?

The findings of the AAUW report raise important issues concerning young women and self-esteem. It finds, among other things, that in elementary

Next issue: Discussion of Pluralism. If you would like to get additional copies of the *WEEA Digest*, to be added to our mailing list, or to receive our free catalog of gender-fair materials, call 800-225-3088.

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school, self-esteem among girls is slightly lower than in boys, but that during adolescence, when both young women and men suffer falling self-esteem, young women's plummets.

Professor Carol Gilligan of Harvard University postulates that as girls move into their teens, they experience a crisis provoked by what their vision of the world and themselves is, and their learning of what the world is really about.

Gilligan challenged traditional thinking on cognitive development by asserting that females and males have different and "contrapuntal" moral voices, females being more concerned with care and connectedness, and males being more concerned with abstract justice.[3] She questioned the traditional notion that the highest level of human development was autonomy. This model forced women into what were perceived of as lower levels of development than men.

What one person defines as low self-esteem may be resistance to cultural expectations to another.

When disputing this idea, Gilligan brought the issue of developmental differences between the genders to the attention of not only the psychology field, but of a wider lay audience.

While Gilligan's work has since been criticized from several angles,[4] she has been extremely influential in the field, and has continued her work on female developmental psychology. She, with colleagues from the Project on Psychology of Women and the Development of Girls at Harvard, recently published a study on self-esteem and self-concept among primarily white girls at a private girls school in New York.[5]

Group differences

Recently, the findings of several studies have pointed to the dangers involved in generalizing a common female or male experience. The AAUW study, for example, found that among girls, self-esteem levels vary dramatically.

The study looked at three groups of girls—Hispanic, white, and African American. Hispanic girls reported the highest levels of self-esteem among girls in elementary school, but drop the greatest amount—38 points out of 100—although not as low as white girls. White girls start out and end with the lowest self-esteem, dropping 33 points. African American girls, on the other hand, show a much different pattern. They start out with slightly lower levels of self-esteem than Hispanic girls, but drop only 7 points and end with a markedly higher level of self-esteem than Hispanic or white girls.

In a WEEA-funded study, Dr. Ardys Sixkiller-Bowker, of Montana State University, found that 72 percent of the Native American female high school graduates she interviewed reported "liking" themselves in high school, as opposed to 64 percent of high school noncompleters. Only about half of these women reported approving of their appearance, less than half reported having athletic or creative talents, and less than 20 percent said that academic skills were important to their self-image.

Bowker concludes that Native American girls cope with racist views and school structures by defining their self-value in terms of service to others: "being a good daughter or being a good sister, being responsible and dependable, and not doing 'bad things' to other people."[6] This finding has similarities with Nancy Zane's WEEA-funded study, *In Our Own Voices*, in which Zane states that family and community bolster self-esteem among African American girls.[7]

Others have hypothesized that many young women of color develop a stronger self-esteem in the face of hurdles that include racism and classism. But research on this particular aspect of self-esteem is scanty.

Some researchers state that this finding—overcoming bias and prejudice—can sometimes apply to other groups of young women. For example, Beth Zemsky, a psychotherapist who works with lesbian women, has found that young women who are able to claim their sexuality and get support from a community of other lesbians will often have a higher than average level of self-esteem. "This is an act of resistance, in Carol Gilligan's words," Zemsky explains. "Young lesbians receive many, many messages that say being a lesbian is wrong and bad. If young women are able to resolve enough family issues or get out of the family, if they are able to find a community of support, they can often externalize the negative messages. This helps them build a very strong sense of self."

Advocate Harilyn Rousso reports that there is very little hard data on self-esteem and girls with disabilities. Rousso states that often these young women feel, and are, isolated. There is rarely a strong community of other women with disabilities from which to gain confidence and role models.

Zemsky and Rousso both point out that lesbian girls and young women with disabilities most often do not have parents who can identify with and provide support for their particular situation. Whereas most young women of color have mothers who can show support and help them identify and fight racism, disabled and lesbian girls most often are more isolated.

Why does this happen?

Psychologists, such as Jean Baker Miller, talk about psychological or cognitive development. She states that girls, as they grow older, define themselves as a "being-in-relationship." However, because of societal influences, they have also incorporated a sense—again, to varying degrees—that they are not fully and freely to use all of their powers. During adolescence they receive this message in a much stronger way. They meet head-on many of the external forces that provide obstacles to that development.[8]

Schools and self-esteem messages

Other researchers look at the particular influences

in young women's worlds. Academics is important to many girls. But, says Carol Shakeshaft, schools in the United States teach to only 15 percent of the population. She claims that schools use teaching strategies and curriculum that favor strengths of white, able-bodied males.[9]

Shakeshaft points out, "the average female is ignored—neither reprimanded nor praised. . . . They learn that, if they do well in school, it is because they are lucky or work hard, not because they are smart or capable. The interactions of teachers with students reinforce the societal message that females are inferior."[10]

Lee Anne Bell and Jacqueline Jordan Irvine have looked at how girls react to school structures. They discuss many of the coping strategies that girls use to fit into a system that values different things than they do, while they also try to maintain their connectedness to others. They also stress that a school culture that valued equity and social solidarity instead of competition and individualism would be far more hospitable to most girls.[11]

Female sexuality

Sexuality is a troublesome area for all teenagers, and one that has a direct impact on self-esteem. For instance, on the one hand, young women experience many physical changes that make it known both to themselves and others that they are developing into sexual beings. On the other hand, in American society, they are told both explicitly and implicitly that sexual activity is "bad," and that while women's bodies invite sexual activity, women don't have total control over it.[12]

Herant Katchadourian, a researcher on adolescent sexuality, states that sexual identity—involving both sexual orientation and gender identity—"becomes an integral part of the sense of self."[13] The importance of sexuality to adolescents' identity makes particularly troublesome Michelle Fine's observation that in the United States, discussion of this topic with young women generally deals with victimization by boys, disease, and problem pregnancy.[14]

Dr. Jeanne Marecek, of Swarthmore College, calls for programs that communicate views of women's bodies that are powerful and in control of their own sexuality. Current messages to young women, she remarks, "often identify women's bodies as sites of shame, objectification, danger, and coercion."[15]

The issue of sexuality for lesbian teenagers can be even more difficult than for heterosexuals. A number of experts who work with gay and lesbian youth note that lesbian girls are extremely isolated, and, as social worker Joyce Hunter notes, "girls' traditional socialization puts tremendous pressure on teenaged lesbians to hide their sexual orientation."[16]

Studies are just beginning to look at the special situation of this population, thus there is now little information on their self-esteem issues. The connection between sexual orientation and self-esteem is one that must be explored further. And one of the challenges for researchers in this area is how to look at and include issues for bisexual teenagers and young women unsure of their sexuality.

Effects of low self-esteem

What does all of this mean? There is hardly an area of human life where self-esteem does not play an important role. But only a few of these areas have been researched in terms of the effects of self-esteem level.

In a landmark book, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, the authors look at developmental issues in young women and how women's "voices" are affected by self-esteem.[17]

Young women who are able to claim their sexuality and get support from a community of other lesbians will often have a higher than average level of self-esteem.

Health issues

A number of health problems have been traced to low self-esteem, including eating disorders, substance abuse, dropout, depression, and suicide. Eating disorders are a phenomena belonging mostly to young women. Ninety to 95 percent of all cases of anorexia nervosa occur in girls. This syndrome—with symptoms including a distorted body image and a refusal to maintain a healthy body weight—seems to be related to young women's declining satisfaction with their physical appearance during adolescence.[18]

Teenaged girls are diagnosed much more often than teenaged boys as being clinically depressed. This difference has been linked with sex-role socialization and to situational factors, in addition to hormonal differences.[19]

Math and science selection

One of the most interesting findings of the recent AAUW study was a "strong relationship between math and science and adolescent self-esteem. Math and science have the strongest relationship on self-esteem for young women, and as they 'learn' that they are not good at these topics their sense of self-worth and aspirations for themselves deteriorate."[20]

The AAUW study also finds that besides having lower overall self-esteem, girls "are more likely than boys to have their declining sense of themselves inhibit their actions and abilities."[21] This finding, coupled with the finding that students who like math and science are much more likely to envision a professional career for themselves than other students, shows that low self-esteem is related to career considerations.

Another interesting finding is that "dramatically, adolescent women who like math are more confident about their appearance than are all adolescent men, whether or not they like math (and [more] than adolescent women who do not like math). And young women who like math and science worry less about others liking them."

This finding implies that young women who enjoy math place more importance on this skill as a part of their self-worth than on acceptance by

[Girls] are not fully and freely to use all of their powers.

others, a balance that is more common among young men.

Sports as a positive influence

This "spreading confidence" has also been observed in the area of sports. Mary Ellen Colton and Susan Gore have found that half of all girls who participate in some kind of sports experience higher than average levels of self-esteem and less depression.[22] And two studies by the Women's Sports Foundation support this finding, showing that the most dramatic effects are among Hispanic, African American, and white rural and urban girls.[23]

Further research

Researchers and program directors are calling now for more attention to diversity in studying self-esteem. A recent conference sponsored by the Valentine Foundation and Women's Way of Philadelphia brought together researchers, funders, and advocates to talk about girls' development and their needs.

At this conference, Dr. Harriette Pipes McAdoo, of Howard University, raised the issue of lumping together all girls of color: "Too often stereotypic attitudes blind us [into] looking only at one segment of young women of color, those who are in poverty.... We will be more sensitive to the cultural issues that are at play for this group of young girls if we are able to disaggregate the social economic dimension from that of their ethnicity. We must look separately at the needs of Black girls who are from families who are middle class, who are working class, and who are in poverty."[24]

Others have spoken of the diversity of experience within other communities, pointing out that a second-generation Cuban American girl will have very different experiences and idea of self than a recently immigrated Salvadoran girl, or a Puerto Rican teenager. And a young woman from China will have different outlooks than a second-generation Japanese American teenager.

Participants of the Valentine Foundation conference also spoke of the need to consider the development of girls' self-esteem as it relates to "larger issues of women's roles in society and societal impediments to women's growth and development," as well as the "pervasive covert and overt violence against women in the U.S."[25]

Dr. Michael Resnick, director of research at the University of Minnesota Adolescent Health Program, identifies a third area. Along with other researchers, he emphasizes the need to move away from "problem-centered" research and toward research on resiliency and resistance.

"More important for our purposes is to look at a group of teenagers who by all accounts are 'high risk' for failure, but who manage to succeed," he elaborates. "We need to be able to identify what these youth do to resist the negative pressures, what makes them 'resilient.'"

We also need to look past the individuals affected to the structures and the society that have created and sustained the problem. We need to be able to identify problems in these structures and ways to enact change to produce more positive outcomes.

What can we do?

There are many avenues that we need to explore. However, young women need attention now—we cannot wait for "more research." Fortunately there is consensus among many about actions that work.

Michael Resnick states that even though there are many variations among teenagers of different ethnic/racial groups, genders, and social classes, some generalities can be drawn. Research has shown that both parents and schools have a stronger influence on adolescents' self-esteem than have their teenaged peers.

In Resnick's research on resiliency in adolescents, he finds that the single most important predictor of an adolescent positively weathering stress and attacks on self-esteem is connectedness to at least one competent adult. "Those adolescents who are able to resist the negative outcomes almost always have a high level of connectedness to family or other adults.... The most important thing is that the relationship has to be nonexploitative."

Psychologist Susan Harter agrees that adults have a strong influence on adolescents' self-esteem. "Recent findings indicate that ... development is most likely to be promoted by adults who model, as well as encourage, the communication of a personal point of view that may be different from others' while simultaneously retaining an openness to the views of others.... We can capitalize on the penchant for emulation by providing a broad, diverse array of role models with whom it is acceptable to identify."

Role of schools and families

Resnick identifies "academic connectedness" as the second most important predictor of resiliency: "These adolescents were also able to identify school as an arena where they felt competent. And they often named one or two special teachers." Schools, then, also have an important role in positively affecting teens. Teachers are especially critical.

Resnick identifies two other key indicators of resiliency: spiritual connectedness and low levels of family stress. "By spiritual connectedness we mean either religiousness in terms of an established church or simply spiritualness in terms of some kind of higher being or higher order," he explains. And he emphasizes that low levels of family stress does not mean that the traditional idea of two-parent families is necessary. "We are talking about an absence of domestic violence and abuse, and absence of psychological separation of the parent or parents. Poverty can also be a strong stress factor in families."

This means that parents and other family members can do much to help young women

believe in themselves. They must be aware of any biases they have and work to present girls with opportunities rather than closed doors. By providing positive role models and support, among other things, they can positively affect a girls' self-esteem.

Recognizing these four factors that help girls be resilient to adverse situations, we can also identify specific strategies for developing programs that will help girls improve their self-esteem. Susan Harter observes that in the past, most programs that have tried to directly work on self-esteem have not been helpful. Most programs now try to work on self-esteem in the context of some other issue, like math and science learning.

Shaping a resilient generation of young women

Self-esteem is critical to every part of an adolescent's and adult's well-being. The recent studies showing significant drops in teenaged girls' self-image should set off alarms among all of us. We do need to know more about specific groups of young women, especially concerning young women with disabilities, nonheterosexual teenagers, and class and racial/ethnic differences. Only by knowing what the differences are, can we draw out commonalities fairly.

But even prepared with appropriate statistics and studies, our greatest need is to understand exactly what self-esteem is and how to improve it. We need to be able to change systems and structures that damage or stifle young women's self-esteem. This, combined with an ability and knowledge of how to help individuals, regardless of their "category," will help us begin down that road to change.

Sundra Flansburg
Education Development Center

... discussion of [sexuality] with young women generally deals with victimization by boys, disease, and problem pregnancy.

Notes

[1] Susan Harter, "Self and Identity Development," in *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent*, ed. by S. Shirley Feldman and Glen R. Elliott (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 365.

[2] Greenberg-Lake: The Analysis Group, *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America* (Washington: American Association of University Women, 1991), 7.

[3] Although Gilligan's is not the first in this area. See, for example, Clara Thompson, "Cultural Pressures in the Psychology of Women," *Psychiatry*, 5, 331–39, cited in Jean Baker Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, by Judith Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), 19.

[4] See for example "On In a Different Voice: An Interdisciplinary Forum," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11, no. 21 (1986): 304+; Anne Colby and William Damon, "Listening to a Different Voice: A Review of Gilligan's In a Different Voice," *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1983): 473–81.

[5] Carol Gilligan, Nona P. Lyons, and Trudy J. Hanmer, eds., *Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

[6] Dr. Ardys Sixkiller-Bowker, *Sisters in the Blood: A Study of Native American Female High School Dropouts and High School and College Graduates* (unpublished manuscript, 1991), 174–76.

[7] Nancy Zane, *In Our Own Voices*, cited in Debra L. Schultz, *Risk, Resiliency, and Resistance: Current Research on Adolescent Girls* (New York: Ms. Foundation for Women and the National Girls Initiative, 1991), 10.

[8] Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self," 20–21.

[9] Charol Shakeshaft, "A Gender at Risk," *Phi Delta Kappan* (March 1986): 499.

[10] Shakeshaft, "A Gender at Risk," 501.

[11] Lee Anne Bell and Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, "A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of the Devaluation of Girls in School: Perspectives from the Student and Teacher Role" (unpublished paper, presented at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting, San Francisco, March 1989), 11.

[12] Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self," 19–21; Diana Scully, *Understanding Sexual Violence: A Study of Convicted Rapists* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 115, 166.

[13] Herant Katchadourian, "Sexuality," in *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent*, ed. by S. Shirley Feldman and Glen R. Elliott (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 50.

[14] Michelle Fine, cited in Debra L. Schultz, *Risk, Resiliency, and Resistance: Current Research on Adolescent Girls* (New York: Ms. Foundation for Women and National Girls Initiative, 1991), 340.

[15] Jeanne Marecek, in *A Conversation About Girls*, by the Valentine Foundation and the Womens Way (Philadelphia: Valentine Foundation, 1990), 16.

[16] Joyce Hunter, cited in Schultz, *Risk, Resiliency, and Resistance*, 14.

[17] Mary Field, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986).

[18] Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Edward O. Reiter, "The Role of Pubertal Processes," in *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent*, 50.

[19] Brooks-Gunn and Reiter, "The Role of Pubertal Processes," 50.

[20] Greenberg-Lake, *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*, 12.

[21] Greenberg-Lake, *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America*, 6.

[22] Mary Ellen Colton and Susan Gore, cited in Schultz, *Risk, Resiliency, and Resistance*, 7.

[23] Women's Sports Foundation, *Moms, Dads, Daughters, and Sports* (1988) and *Minorities in Sports* (1989), cited in Schultz, *Risk, Resiliency, and Resistance*, 7.

[24] Harriette Pipes McAdoo, in *A Conversation About Girls*, 8.

[25] Valentine Foundation and Womens Way, "Development of Sense of Self in Girls," in *A Conversation About Girls*, 2.

WEEA Publications Highlight Self-Esteem Issues . . .

The Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) Program has funded many projects which address the issue of self-esteem among women and girls. Innovative research materials and curricula developed in these projects are distributed by the WEEA Publishing Center.

An education focus on self-esteem begins in early childhood. One of the publishing center's most recent publications, *Creating Sex-Fair Family Day Care: A Guide for Trainers*, offers activities and guidance to day care providers to help promote gender equity and positive self-image with the children they care for. Day care providers, by promoting nonstereotyped play, communicate positive messages to children to reinforce that it is okay to cross the sex-stereotyped boundaries.

Because of societal barriers and negative messages, many women believe they have few options for self-sufficiency.

Maximizing Young Children's Potential helps educators and parents identify sex-role stereotypes and change their interactions with young children. The manual shows teachers how to use workshops to address issues of inequity and create a nonsexist environment for the children in their classrooms and it also includes training resources and an extensive bibliography for both parents and educators.

The transition from childhood to adolescence is a difficult time for girls and affects their performance in school. There is a strong relationship between math and science and adolescent self-esteem. *Add-Ventures for Girls: Building Math Confidence* is a recent WEEA publication chosen as an Exemplary Math Material by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education. Its experiential exercises help girls feel more comfortable with and more able to succeed in mathematics. *Add-Ventures for Girls* provides methods to combat the internal (attitudinal) and external (societal) barriers girls face which prevent them from reaching their mathematics potential.

Developing self-concept in middle school can lay important groundwork for healthy self-esteem through adult life. *Fair Play: Developing Self-Concept and Decision-Making Skills in the Middle School* by Florida State University, is a curriculum for middle school students in grades 6-9. It helps participants improve female and male self-concepts, learn to make sound decisions, communicate effectively, solve problems, and get along with others. It easily integrates into language arts, physical education, math and science or social studies classrooms.

Dropping out can be prevented by helping students deal with self-esteem issues early in their school career. *Going Places: An Enrichment Program to Empower Students*, published in 1991 and based on a project conducted in the San Diego City Schools, is a middle school curriculum that targets those students most at-risk of dropping out. The 18-week program addresses such topics as self-worth, success, values, and communication. Each topic builds upon the previous one to create a bridge between students' low self-esteem and lack of belief in school success to positive self-image and, eventually, high school graduation.

Adolescence is a time of diverse and complex feelings for young women. Those feelings can be extremely complicated if that teen woman is also a mother. Educational Equity Concepts, Inc., has developed two videos to address the issues of education, work, love, and money as they relate to teenagers and parenting. *Mixed Messages: Teens Talk about Sex, Romance, Education, and Work* stars strong inner-city women who have courageously faced their problems, continued their education, and participated in nontraditional work programs. In *Breaking Stereotypes: Teens Talk About Raising Children* teen mothers eloquently discuss strategies for raising their own children free of sex-role limitations.

Single parenting is also discussed in depth in *Single Mother's Resource Handbook*. Recognizing that single mothers confront special challenges in managing their lives and the lives of their families, this resource guide offers fun activities for mothers to do with their children as well as exercises and suggestions for single mothers on how to establish and maintain a positive and healthy self-image.

Adulthood is often the culmination of self-esteem issues for women. Because of societal barriers and negative messages created in early years, many women believe they have few options for self-sufficiency. *The Woman Within* examines the role of a positive self-image for a woman's personal growth. It presents activities to allow women to be comfortable with themselves and to use that comfort to make changes in their lives.

Your Money and Your Life: Financial Planning for Low-Income Working Women is a training guide for peer teachers to help make financial planning less intimidating to women. It provides methods to address attitudes about money, how to manage with and without it, and how to save it.

Native American women are highlighted in *Circles of Women: Professional Skills Training with American Indian Women*. This workshop leader's guide to building self-esteem and integrating biculturalism into the lives of Native American women addresses the special needs of these women today as they attempt to balance and synthesize

traditional and contemporary leadership roles at home and in the workplace.

Self-esteem for young women with disabilities can be a double bind. *Barrier Free: Serving Young Women with Disabilities* by Linda Marks and Harilyn Rousso in conjunction with the YWCA of New York City, addresses these issues surrounding disabled young women. The book is a step-by-step training manual for groups that wish to provide services to teenagers with disabilities. It discusses the topics of sexuality, independence, career development, and role models in relation to adolescent girls with disabilities. It also combines exercises with practical, real-life examples of the obstacles facing young women with disabilities and how they can be overcome.

Harilyn Rousso has also written *Disabled, Female, and Proud!* It outlines the stories of ten disabled women, how they have overcome the double prejudice of gender and disability, and how they are currently leading full, successful lives. The women featured offer insights and positive images on lifestyles, relationships, and careers that relate to all women, not just those with disabilities.

Educational Equity Concepts, Inc., is directing a project with funds from the WEEA Program entitled Educational Resource Center: Furthering Opportunities for Women and Girls with Disabilities. Project staff is collecting information and making it available to educational institutions and organizations as well as individual women and girls who are disabled. Information will include existing documents identifying problems and issues surrounding disabilities; successful model programs in educational institutions; and practical strategies and resources to help institutions increase the enrollment of women and girls with disabilities.

All the products mentioned were developed with funds from the Women's Educational Equity Act Program and are available from the WEEA Publishing Center, unless otherwise noted. The WEEA Publishing Center materials may be purchased by mailing a check or money order for the amount of the order (plus $2 shipping for orders under $25; $4 for orders $25 and over) to the WEEA Publishing Center. To order by phone, using MasterCard, Visa, or purchase orders over $25, or for information on additional resources available through the WEEA Publishing Center, call 800-225-3088 (in Massachusetts call 617-969-7100).

WEEA Products

Creating Sex-Fair Family Day Care: A Guide for Trainers #2733 $10.50

Maximizing Young Children's Potential: A Non-Sexist Manual for Early Childhood Trainers #2121 $6.75

Add-Ventures for Girls: Building Math Confidence #2709 elementary $25.00; #2710 middle school $28.00

Fair Play: Developing Self-Concept and Decision-Making Skills in the Middle School #2498 $141.25 (complete set of 12 books)

Barrier Free: Serving Young Women with Disabilities #2732 $8.00

Going Places: An Enrichment Program to Empower Students #2713 $32.00

Single Mother's Resource Handbook #2147 $6.75

Your Money and Your Life: Financial Planning for Low-Income Working Women #2582 $13.00

The Woman Within #2005 $6.75

Circles of Women: Professional Skills Training with American Indian Women #2697 $20.00

Stories of ten disabled women, . . . and how they are currently leading full, successful lives.

WEEA Products Distributed by Others

Mixed Messages: Teens Talk about Sex, Romance, Education
Work and Breaking Stereotypes: Teens Talk About Raising Children
Educational Equity Concepts, Inc.
114 East 32 Street, New York, NY 10016.
(212)725-1803

Disabled, Female, and Proud! Stories of Ten Women with Disabilities
Exceptional Parent Press
1170 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02134.
(617)730-5800

Educational Resource Center: Furthering Opportunities for Women and Girls with Disabilities.
Educational Equity Concepts, Inc.
114 East 32 Street, New York, NY 10016.
(212)725-1803

WEEA Working Papers

WEEA working papers present in-depth discussions on cutting-edge issues in gender equity:

Teaching Mathematics Effectively and Equitably to Females #2744 $4.00

Building Self: Adolescent Girls and Self-Esteem #2745 $4.00

Legislation for Change: A Case Study of Title IX and the Women's Educational Equity Act Program #2749 $4.00

Center for Equity and Cultural Diversity: Creating a vision of a pluralistic society

Interdisciplinary approach includes examinations of both individual and structural barriers.

Working with individuals and organizations, co-creating a vision of what it is like to live, learn, and work in a pluralistic society, EDC's Center for Equity and Cultural Diversity offers a range of resources to the country. The WEEA Publishing Center forms the core of the Center for Equity and Cultural Diversity. Through its four major activities: publishing and technical assistance, diversity training, forums, and field-based projects the center seeks to improve the ways individuals and organizations reach their potential and succeed in our complex society.

Building on conversations and explorations with scholars, researchers, and practitioners from around the world, such as Paolo Freire, the center develops a range of projects that help deepen our understanding of education, equity, and pluralism.

Codify knowledge and provide resources

The center's resource collection gathers the best ideas and best practices in a wide range of areas, from policy to practice. This information is shared with others and forms the core of much of the project work in the center. For instance, the center recently completed a national survey of good program practices for women in prisons.

Other exciting new work includes linguistic diversity and math reform, cultural diversity in patient health care interactions, and educational media for Latino parents.

The center's *Diversity Training Institute* designs and tailors diversity training to schools, community organizations, and corporations responding to the challenge of a pluralistic society. Our interdisciplinary approach includes examinations of both individual and structural barriers to intercultural understanding and to building a pluralistic culture.

The institute has worked with several schools trying to improve intercultural communication with parents. This work continues with an intensive training for 11 school districts that want to infuse multiculturalism into their schools.

The Center for Equity and Cultural Diversity was the first to receive funding to create a job training project for homeless women. This project developed an empowerment model that addressed the specific needs of homeless women and their children. Building on this project, the center will provide technical assistance to projects serving the homeless throughout the country.

In addition to these projects, the Center for Equity and Cultural Diversity plans to expand its publishing and dissemination of equity and diversity materials for classroom educators.

For more information on any of the center's projects contact Vivian Guilfoy, director, at 617-969-7100.

Women's Educational Equity Act Publishing Center
Education Development Center, Inc.

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